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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that current and impending changes in the media industries in Britain, France, and Belgium will stimulate a more positive relationship between these industries and undergraduate communication studies. Topics discussed include: (1) the attitudes of both the industry and academic researchers toward research and its relationship with the communications industries; (2) industry/research relationships; (3) the inappropriateness of generalizing from research to undergraduate teaching in communication studies; (4) the government and communication studies; (5) the European situation in terms of higher education and university-industry cooperation; (6) vocationalism as a problem in communication studies; (7) some industrial attitudes toward communication studies; (8) lessons from France and Belgium, where academic communication studies and the media industries in Europe are concentrated; (9) the relationship between media and academic education in Belgium; and (10) the future of communication studies, i.e., a description of six potential features of the developing relationship between media industries and academic communication studies. (1 end note and 22 references) (CGD)

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Introduction

This paper is about undergraduate education in Communication Studies. * It argues that current circumstances offer the promise of the emergence of fruitful relationships between such education and the changing media industries. But the fact that these circumstances may be in some ways favourable to development of education/industry links does not imply that all is straightforward. The history of relationships between education and industry in Britain, the entrenched attitudes towards training which are prevalent in the traditional media industries and the rather narrow assumptions which dominate current government thinking about education and vocationalism, all provide important obstacles.

Our discussion of France and Belgium permits guarded optimism: as the media industries themselves confront rapid change we can expect their attitudes to appropriate education for their recruits also to change. It also seems likely that Communication Studies will become better recognised the longer it has existed: our graduates are in some ways our best public relations officers.

The relationship with industry of undergraduate education in Communication Studies is in some ways paralleled by that of communications research and some of the conditions which permit optimism about teaching may also be appropriate to research. But the circumstances of the two aspects of academic work are not the same and it is important that the longer pedigree of research and its higher public profile do not lend to its history dominating expectations about the potential of undergraduate teaching.

Communications research has displayed continual tension and mutual reservation between academics and industrial practitioners. To quote

* SEE FOOTNOTE 1

Lazarsfeld's well-known comment from 1948:

> 'If there is any one institutional disease to which the media of mass communications seem particularly subject, it is a nervous reaction to criticism. As a student of mass media I have been continually struck and occasionally puzzled by this reaction, for it is the media themselves which so vigorously defend principles guaranteeing the right to criticize' (Lazarsfeld. 1948)

This sensitivity on the part of the industry is loosely paralleled, we will argue, by the continuing use in academic circles of the critical/administrative distinction as a basis for classifying research. This has obscured the emergence of policy as a major orientation in Communication Studies, an orientation which shares with 'administrative' research its concern to contribute to real decision-making but which also displays some of the key features of 'critical' research, most obviously its willingness to engage in debates about fundamental goals and values.

Although we insist that undergraduate education occupies a position distinctly different from that of academic research, it is clearly the case that many of the overall expectations of Communication Studies are derived from the history of communications research. We will therefore begin our discussion with a brief consideration of attitudes towards research and its relationship with the communications industries as held by, in the first instance, representatives of the industry, and in the second, academic researchers.

Industrial attitudes to academic communications research

Lazarsfeld's diagnosis of nervousness as a chronic industrial ailment can

be easily documented. In part it reflects the normal reluctance of any group to see their taken-for-granted assumptions exposed to outside scrutiny, exacerbated by the exposed public position occupied by the main media organisations.

Grace Wyndham Goldie's review of Phillip Elliott's 'Making of a Television Series' is a case in point. While not overtly hostile to research scrutiny, Mrs Goldie expressed strong views about the qualifications required by the successful researcher, stressing:

> 'the need for the training of any research worker who hopes to study mass communication to include a period of practical work within a broadcasting organisation. Only the practical experience of trying to do the job will give him a real insight into the purposes and practices of making television programmes." (Goldie. 1972)

At the risk of over-simplifying Mrs Goldies's argument, one reading of this might suggest that research scrutiny is acceptable only if researchers become 'insiders' As Croll and Golding usefully pointed out (Croll and Golding. 1972), this view is in striking contrast with the assumption that, in a time far shorter than the minimum for a conventional academic research, journalists expect to be able to interpret the most sensitive and complex of events. Such a conflict between expectations of researchers and journalists, both professional outsiders to the groups which they report upon, is testimony to Lazarsfeld's accuracy.

Responses to the work of the Glasgow University Media Group show the heat which can be generated in conflicts between researchers and practitioners. In replying to a study largely focussing on the Labour leadership election of 1980, Peter Sissons and Paul McKee, on behalf of ITN wrote:

> 'ITN submits that the findings of the Glasgow University Media Group came close to being a political tract, with material being selected quite unscrupulously to substantiate its main beliefs. For this to masquerade as academic work is the greatest disservice that can be done to any conscientious researcher. We invite any open and fairminded observer to judge us on all the facts, not a selection from them.'
>
> (Sissons and McKee. 1981. Authors' emphasis)

In claiming that "the major stories ... were inaccurate constructions" and that "political news was not much more than a sectarian attack on the left," GUMG hardly conceal the political dimensions of this analysis or their conflict with the professional self-image of the news teams.(Philo 1981) Both contribute to the ferocity of this exchange and to the perpetuation of Lazarsfeld's 'institutional disease'.

But it should be noted that Sissons and McKee do not object to research 'per se' and, indeed, they attempt to rebut the GUMG allegations through research evidence of their own. Perhaps, after a lengthy illness, Lazarsfeld's patient is showing signs of recovery. Further evidence on this point will be considered below.

Academic attitudes to the relationship of research to industry

Once again the initial definition was offered by Lazarsfeld with his distinction between critical and administrative research. Administrative research, according to Lazarsfeld, assumes "that modern media of communication are tools handled .... for given purposes" and that "it is the task of research to make the tools better known and thus to facilitate its use." (Lazarsfeld 1941) The goals of the media organisation or of media users are accepted as given and the purpose of the research is to facilitate their achievement.

All authorities seem to agree that critical research is far more difficult to define. In its earliest usage, concerning the work of Adorno and others associated with the Frankfurt School, it represents a radical disenchantment with the mass media and their role in modern society and to have looked for practical outcomes, in terms of contributions to debate about developments within contemporary media institutions, would have jarred with many of its fundamental commitments. But even then the position was not entirely consistent as is reflected in Adorno's brief period in Lazarsfeld's Bureau. The difficulty of achieving an unambiguous definition of critical research remains and for Halloran "it could be argued that the main unity of the critical approach ... is in its opposition to conventional work rather than in any more shared positive approach." (Halloran 1981).

The debate about critical and administrative research has been a continuing controversy in communication studies and we cannot attempt to resolve it here. What is important for our purposes is that from one point of view it reflects a genuine fear of the corrupting effects of too close a dependence upon industrial sponsors. Such dependence is conceived as, for example, seducing the researcher away from theory towards rampant empiricism, away from a proper

recognition of the relationship between communication processes and society towards a naive acceptance of 'communication problems' as defined by those with an interest in particular solutions. From a rival viewpoint, critical research is sometimes conceived of as achieving its theoretical purity only at the cost of isolation from real world problems in an ivory tower of academic abstractions.

We would suggest, following Kurt Lang (Lang 1979) amongst other authorities that the binary opposition between critical and administrative research misrepresents the current state of work in Communication Studies.

The difficulty in defining 'critical research' as confronted by Halloran and others reflects the breadth of the research agenda which is left after the exclusion of work which can confidently be defined as 'administrative'.

In turn, this reflects the fact that the goals of media organisations, which 'administrative research' is supposed to accept as given, are rarely matters of agreement within the mainstream media organisations or between the various outside groups which may constitute the users of the media.

In other words, while the collection of quantitive data such as BARB's audience ratings may be accurately construed as 'administrative research' it is difficult to find much else which does not have initially to confront the ambiguities within and conflict between the various goals which are variously held out to media institutions, and argued over by their personnel. All work of this kind, by virtue of such direct confrontation with debates over fundamental goals, is by definition 'critical'.

But a major tradition in communication research has taken as its main rationale the achievement of an input into policy debates about current

media institutions and their performances which might, naively, seem to be the preserve of administrative research.

In his controversy with Jay Blumler and his associates over "The Challenge of Election Broadcasting", Nick Garnham cogently summaries their agreement over a commitment to policy research:

> "I support Blumler's desire to relate research to the actual hurly-burly of policy, against those who would see their science as a value-free positivistic activity which merely accurately describes a world progressing independently beyond the confines of their ivory towers, or, on the other hand, those Marxists who are so arrogantly secure within their self-justifying socio-political theories that the working of the actual society in which they live is reduced to triviality by the march of history." (Garnham 1979.)

Within this area of agreement there are, of course, serous conflicts. For our purposes, the most important is the continuing preoccupation with the dangers of too close a dependency on media interests. Gerbner reflects this when he urges that the "professional integrity" of communication Studies requires that:

> "its members are not just hired hands but men and women prepared and free to scrutinize the ends as well as the means of any project." (Gerbner 1983)

Arguably what is thus taking place is that the central concern of the old debate about administrative and critical research is continuing within various positions in critical, policy oriented research. But what these positions share is a recognition that the option of avoiding getting the

academic hands dirty is not available or appropriate and therefore that strategies have to be developed for reconciling the requirements of an address to immediate policy issues with larger academic imperatives. Perhaps it is worth repeating here that conflict must be expected about the adequacy of such strategies.

An overview of industry/research relationships

In summary our proposition is that the disease which Lazarsfeld diagnosed amongst the industrialists is loosely paralleled in the caution and reserve of researchers, but that the signs of recovery detected amongst the former group are reflected amongst the latter in an increasing interest in issues of current policy.

One outcome of the history sketchily suggested so far is the apparent sparseness of major studies of the workings of media organisations. Perhaps too much should not be made of this: the British media have a national, centralised form which is unusual in industry and makes generalised comparisons with other sectors difficult. But on the other hand, the major cultural significance of the communications media inevitably creates a curiosity which research so far has not been able to satisfy.

Those fundamental changes in the contemporary media which are discussed below should change this position. If the goals and organisational structures of media organisations are indeed becoming arenas of overt political debate, and if the range of choice available to consumers is significantly growing, then the need will grow for information which early policy-oriented research in Communication Studies can provide. An early indication of this may come from the research commissioned by various media organisations in support of their representations to the Peacock enquiry.

The inappropriateness of generalising from research to undergraduate teaching in Communication Studies

Lazarsfeld's notion of an institutional disease in media research took as its patient the media industry and our argument so far suggests that academic researchers are themselves not immune from the sensitivity and caution which are its main symptoms. But can the teaching branch of academic Communication Studies permit itself to fall prey to this debilitating ailment with the inevitable delay before eventual recovery?

Clearly it cannot afford to do so. To pursue the anology to breaking point, Communication Studies has to inspect the sickroom; it must evaluate the accuracy of the diagnoses available, but it catches the disease at its peril.

Undergraduate courses in Communication Studies are about the production of graduates. These graduates must know the area in which they have been educated, even if they will not be equally familiar with all its parts. If undergraduates are not to be the academic equivalent of the schizophrenic quick-change artists, the various traditions and specialisms have to be located on a single overall map. To use Lazarsfeld original vocabulary, this must mean a consideration of administrative and critical research, of the continuities and conflicts between them and of the extent to which new concerns have emerged.

But there are more concrete issues than this. Where do Communication Studies graduates go after college and, even more saliently, where do they hope to go? A major career target is the media industry, however broadly conceived, and students are naturally impatient that their studies should be relevant to this ambition.

This is not to suggest that all students are identically motivated or that

they do not appreciate the role of theoretical, critical, components in their courses. But where pay-off in terms of an address to concrete real-world problems is available, students expect that it should be achieved. This is not unreasonable, any more than is the expectation that a Communication Studies course should have as one of its main objectives - although not the only one - the equipping of students with knowledge relevant to their subsequent career ambitions.

For both of these reasons, the need to make coherent sense of the whole field and the career ambitions of students, undergraduate education has to give even more attention than does research to the practical applications of critical analysis.

To draw on the continental experience discussed below, if such an emphasis leads to more Communication Studies graduates being employed in the media industries, than facilities for subsequent research could be expected to become easier as more administrators and decision-takers have a training in and understanding of the academic area.

This does not imply that Communication Studies courses should willingly be sucked into a position as the teaching equivalent of administrative research, concentrating on the development of problem-solving communication skills. Any movement in this direction would be counter-productive, misrepresenting the fluid nature of a field in which a crucial question which has to be asked of any 'communication problem' is; 'for whom is it a problem?' Furthermore, no longer can we expect, if we ever could, single 'establishment' answers to such questions. Equally importantly, to move in the direction of communication problem-solving would sell short the potential for "a challenge to unthinking acceptance" and "the possibility of conscious control and deliberate change" (Gerbner 1983) which Gerbner saw as the key contribution of critical Communication Studies.

Training, education and vocationalism in Communication Studies

The argument so far has posed the issues in general, almost abstract, terms. It has encouraged a view of Communication Studies as increasingly relevant to the media industries and asserts that developments in the industry and in academic work are favourable to a recognition of this relevance.

But such arguments are unreal unless linked to an analysis of the particular historical forms which have arisen in the relationship between British higher education and industry and of governmental attitudes to this relationship.

By way of introduction to such an analysis it is useful to identify ways in which educational institutions could meet vocational objectives in higher education.

Vocationalism implies that the courses students follow should in some senses equip them for careers and the world of work. It is an argument about relevance. But there are different views as to what counts as relevant preparation. Here we can distinguish between narrow vocational training, vocational training and education. Narrow vocational training aims to reproduce quite specific often technical skills and techniques for a given occupation clearly located and in a specific industry. Vocational training likewise emphasises the inculcation of skills and techniques, directly applicable to a particular occupation which may vary somewhat according to the organisation and medium of communication, e.g. journalism and radio journalism. On the other hand education in communication studies is often seen as removed from the production of directly useable skills and techniques given its academic emphasis, critiques of practise, an interest in relationships between media and the state and with policy and so on. Within this panorama the appeal of training is clear. Training allows media institutions to match manpower with current organisational goals and practices, and the skills which the trained bring are supposedly clearly identifiable, it is

clear to employers what these employees are trained to deliver and what to do with them. Education, on the other hand has traditionally been perceived as unable to deliver in quite the same way, thus the relevance of education in communication studies is unclear, the attributes of graduates, their employability, uncertain.

We now turn to document some of these industrial attitudes to vocationalism but pause also to indicate the importance of governmental policies to education and training generally, whose position as the major resource for education and training is critical.

The Government and Communication Studies

Whilst the present government does not have a declared policy towards the study of communication and media, unlike its clear policy of deregulation of the audio visual media themselves, nevertheless it is possible to position communication studies within government thinking. Two processes provide important insights into the likely future of the subject in higher education: one is the Government's attitude to training and vocational education, as evidenced by the increasing role of the Manpower Services Commission in further education and the growth of training initiatives e.g. the TVEI and CPVE (Training and Vocational Educational Initiative and the Certificate in Pre-vocational Education); the other lies in its attitude to particular disciplines in higher education revealed in the 1985 Green Paper (DES 1985).

The government is concerned that higher education should contribute more effectively to economic growth and believes that this will be achieved by greater concentration on science and technology, with the system becoming more flexible, cost effective, adaptable to employers' needs, and predominantly vocational. Provision in the arts is likely to shrink, as advisory bodies consider the optimum distribution of students between sectors, with a view to ensuring that any increase in opportunities to enter higher education do

not lead to increased admissions to humanities courses rather than to so called vocational ones.

These themes are also reflected in research funding policies where the government has declared a wish to foster more collaboration with industry in consultancy, technology transfer, and more effective links between higher education and industry, commerce and the public services, particularly through private funding.

The Green Paper urges that there should be no expansion of the Dip.HE as a one 'A' level entry course at the expense of the more vocational BTEC provision. Indeed, the government plans to protect BTEC diplomas against erosion by unclassified degree courses in the same fields of study, that is science, technology and business.

In all of this, communication and media studies lies in the heartland of the unfavoured. Typical BA programmes, mostly in the public sector, do not carry the overt training objectives referred to in the Green Paper, nor does the study of the mass media lead appropriately to a narrow concentration on the technologies of mass communication. Not surprisingly, then, most programmes of Communication Studies fall into a very unfavoured category in the National Advisory Body's programme which is likely to lead to a reduction in provision on the same scale as that of the humanities generally. Courses in Media Studies with an emphasis on learning media technologies or with a primary concern with communication design or media production training , would receive greater protection from NAB because of these features.

Communication Studies is now an endangered subject in higher education, an 'unprotected' species vulnerable to attack. These general lines of

government policy allow us to deduce a context for Communication Studies in the 1990's. As Guy Neave (Neave. 1985) has argued, generally speaking current developments in higher education turn around three principle elements, first to bring undergraduate studies closer into line with what are perceived as national manpower requirements; second to establish closer links between industry, research and teaching with an emphasis on quality that many feel to be a retreat from the goal of 'equality' attached to higher education in the seventies; and third a reinforcement of monitoring or the policy guidance capacity of higher education administration.

The European Situation

These developments are not particularly new, nor are they confined to the UK, on the contrary they have been noticeable from 1982 onwards. However, it is apparent that these trends are accelerating. Denmark has experienced severe reductions in its higher education budget, and in the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany higher education is being asked to accommodate more students without any increase in budget. In France the newly created Scientifiques et Techniques exist to ensure the graduates emerge from higher education with a 'vocational qualification', and some 25% of the timetable is to be made up of 'vocationally oriented' teaching. In the Netherlands in 1985 the Minister of Education proposed the idea of limiting the number of diplomas a university might award, designed on the one hand to free more places in disciplines deemed crucial for industry, and second to direct students away from fields that are thought to pose particular difficulties when it comes to finding a job. A similar policy is also detectable in Spain, where, rather than enrolling in the humanities, students are to be encouraged to move into three year short cycle courses.

A major initiative in university industry co-operation which reflects European thought on the future of higher education has been initiated by the European Commission. The Comett ' Programme has three objectives: to promote a European identity, notably by stimulating the placement of students in firms located in other Member States; to foster economies of scale through new jointly organised training programmes to combat specific skill shortages resulting from rapid technological changes; and to stimulate the exchange of experience between Member States in the field of university-industry co-operation in training. Significantly, particular support will be given to industry/university partnerships which liaise with counterpart initiatives in other Member States in receiving students, academic and business personnel from other Member States: an important indicator of the cross national dimensions of thinking about academic and industrial collaboration.

Serious questions for Communication Studies are raised by these pan European attitudes to higher education. Is the subject, coming to terms with pressures towards vocationalism; what forms of co-operation with industry might be developed; what are and where are these industries; how can the subject collaborate with those industries, particularly broadcasting and advertising, of which it has been so critical in recent years? It is to these sorts of issues that we now turn, but first some comments on vocationalism and Communication Studies.

Why is vocationalism a problem in Communication Studies?

Vocationalism is not a new issue. All institutions of higher education have had to deal with vocationalism, and not just the public sector, where most communication and media studies courses are found. There is a long history of vocational education and the recognition of professional and vocational relevance in higher education, but highly specific vocationalism

with an emphasis on current practice, skills and expertise creates serious problems for Communication Studies.

There is the problem of obsolescence in the face of rapid change, the disappearance of industries, categories or practices of work, and the long lead times of courses, particularly in the public sector, and CNAA involvement, which make rapid pedagogical response difficult. In addition there is the serious problem arising from the tension between a view of education as liberation/radicalisation, and a view of education as preparation aiming to shape a useful recruit for the present economic system and its culture industries.

Vocationalism also raises resource problems for those teaching the subject. It can make heavy demands on staff time, on equipment, materials and accommodation, on staff expertise, in recruiting qualified, high calibre staff with current or recent practical experience in the 'communication industries', plus the problem of training and re-training other staff in a climate of worsening staff student ratios. With no established history of sandwich courses or even supervised work experience in the subject there are real difficulties in obtaining appropriate placements, obtaining funding, and in the real costs of student supervision. Similarly there has been little collaboration between academics teaching media and the variety of professional bodies existing in an uncrystalised, fuzzy disparate and changing communication industry.

Within most Communication Studies courses there is often an identifiable practical element but this can be a source of difficulty as there is often an assumption that this is the only measure of vocationalism in a course. If the practice of actually doing something becomes divorced from the practice of ideas, then something is lacking in both areas.

The development of critical analysis is essential and is recognised as such by many professional training bodies. The real problem is that employers often feel that students can graduate with a poorly conceived and developed range of skills that do not appear to be of value, immediately or in the long term.

Some industrial attitudes to Communication Studies

Attitudes of those in the communication industries to these issues vary. There are those who are aware of undergraduate programmes in Communication and Media Studies but, who, at the end of the day, favour training or good practical common sense over education. The Joint Advisory Committee on Training for Radio Journalism (JACTRAJ) is a body within which this tension between training and education can be discerned and an overview of some of its recent history is helpful in highlighting this.

Up to 1983 the Committee had recognised only one post graduate level course in radio journalism, but by 1985 two other post graduate programmes and courses at the National Broadcasting School had been recognised, and JACTRAJ was debating whether it would be prepared to consider components of undergraduate courses which had strong vocational aspects. However, by 1985 the shrinking job opportunities in radio journalism were all too evident and JACTRAJ was having difficulty in persuading the BBC and the ILR that all radio journalism students should have experience through placement, although the IBA had provided money to assist the ILR in offering opportunities for students. Uncertainty surrounded the extent to which sectors of the industry were prepared to move beyond their immediate interests when asked to take students. Certainly, many news editors were unsympathetic when it came to taking students on placement as they were costly in both time and money. In particular, the BBC had a long tradition of in house training, and no broadcasting organisation felt that a student

was ready for full-time employment even after completing a specific training course, hence JACTRAJ had great difficulty in persuading news editors of the value of the placement, particularly as it has no real power as an organisation.

The case of radio journalism suggests that the conflicts between the demands of employing those perceived as capable of doing a job within the constraints of time, technology and current definitions of good journalistic practice, and of employing someone with fewer immediate practical skills and a more critical, ideologically informed approach to journalistic practice, is still likely to be resolved by asserting the necessary qualities of the former candidate against the latter.

In the world of film making, photography and video production there is equally little doubt who is the more employable, according to commentators like John Chittock, (1985, Citing Ian Bradshaw, Picture Editor of the Telegraph Sunday Magazine, Chittock argues that skills training is impoverished by too much 'artiness', which Bradshaw equates with poor teaching, and poor teaching, at that about a world lecturers know nothing about. For his part Chittock argues that "whereas a sound cultural appreciation of the media is important... basic skills are essential". But there is more, students need the three Rs - reliability, resourcefulness and relevance, the latter being the nub of 'our industrial ills' we are told, that is, if the customer or the public doesn't want it, no one will pay for it. An academic emphasis then according to Chittock is a 'millstone round our necks'. But, importantly even an emphasis on training is not a panacea for ills, but resourcefulness is. 'The resourceful will succeed with or without training as long as they have talent' argues Chittock. This comment betrays doubts even about training, let alone education, preferring to construct the baseline for professional competence in terms of personal attributes.

In print journalism there is a continuing history of tension between the advocates of training for

journalism and those who emphasise the need for education as a preparation for such a career. One of the severest critics of the value of undergraduate courses in fitting students for employment in the media is John Herbert, Head of Training BBC Local Radio. He has argued for the existence of two types of courses in higher education, those in what he calls media research which are not vocational, and those in media practice, which are. For Herbert, the essential task of media academics in relation to training should be to develop "mind expanding and useful additional academic inputs into professional vocational courses" (Herbert 1982). Indeed he questions the relevance of Communication and Media Studies to the practice of journalism. "Why should journalism be thought of as part of Media Studies...? It has little to do in a practical sense with mass communications or communications sociology". Such a position leads Herbert to conclude that undergraduate courses in Communication and Media Studies are ill equipped to prepare students for the "high vocational attainments" required for jobs in journalism and broadcasting.

Others of the profession are more sanguine about the role of education, and optimistic of the qualities of graduates. Nicholas Herbert (Herbert 1984) editorial director of Westminster Press urges us to recognise that journalism is not confined to a few staid bland local weekly newspapers but is a lively aggressive career which will take people into a variety of activities from television and radio to teletext, cable, and a wide variety of printed media. Because of this, he suggests, journalism needs people with varied educational attainments, not narrow training. The value of the graduate is echoed by journalist broadcaster and now Reader in Journalism, Brian Priestley who argues that a major strength of graduates is that they can think, are often well equipped to take responsibility and to move up chains of command. They are, in Priestley's terms, intelligent generalists who can compete and often excel in the mainstream of a competitive industry (Priestley 1984).

Certainly intellectual agility might be considered a prerequisite for entry to the profession if we heed the warning of Freddie Hodgson of the News of the World, about the pressures on journalists from a variety of political, commercial and industrial sources to shape writing to their advantage (Hodgson 1984). In a more specific sense, though, Hodgson welcomes the direct pay off for journalistic practice of that sociological work on the press which has identified the news stereotype, where fact, sequence, words, style and length form stories into patterns, formula writing which can generate automatic and stale responses by writers and distort news situations.

Training for television is carried out by many public and private agencies and usually proceeds with an emphasis on production skills and techniques. The Royal Television Society has traditionally offered a range of largely technical courses but in a recent report to its own Council recommends that more attention be paid to the contribution of media studies at school and undergraduate levels. This is a welcome move, particularly when one of the fundamental objectives of the Society is to generate informed debate about television.

One important recommendation in the report is that the Society should better liaise with educational institutions involved in teaching potential new entrants to the industry. Such liaison would of course be welcomed by those undergraduate courses that offer short industrial placements both in helping their students to obtain places, and to improve their employment prospects. Much more important than this though, is that such liaison would see a substantial and distinct role for the industry as a serious contributor to debates about television <u>within</u> education, on a systematic, recognised and regular basis.

Early, and as yet wholly impressionistic, evidence about attitudes of employers

in the new industries, such as broadband cable is consistent with the assumptions of the RTS. While such a development would be consistent with the overall tenor of this paper, we recognise that confidence in its future would be premature.

The general conclusion we draw from this survey of attitudes to training and education is that within media organisations and professions there is still a residual preference for training as the most appropriate form of vocational preparation, and that this echoes some of the more simplistic priorities of government statements, nevertheless, there are signs of change in the air, of a recognition that innovations in the industries themselves will demand more flexible, adaptable recruits who can respond to new forms of working organisation and practice.

Evidence from the Royal Television Society suggests that thinking is moving in this direction and the views and experiences of JACTRAJ, representing a relatively new area of training, are starting to reflect this same kind of thinking. This contrasts, somewhat, with debates we see in and around NCTJ and its conventional attitudes to training that are still very influential within the mainstream newspaper industry. Nevertheless, even there we see evidence of the opening of debates about the value of training against education.

Overall, then, there are signs of movements in attitudes to training which parallel the breakdown of established monolithic media organisations. This is, of course, only a beginning, but it is not unreasonable to claim that these will march on in parallel. Such change might indeed accelerate as the still small number of Communication Studies graduates in the various media industries expands and they become a more visible testimony to the 'fit' that is possible between informed, educated graduates, and a changing industry.

Lessons from France and Belgium

Our knowledge of the relationships between academic communication studies and the media industries in Europe represents only the earliest stages of a continuing project. It is concentrated in France and Belgium and draws upon discussion with teaching staffs in a fairly wide range of institutions in those countries. We have not yet talked directly to industrial representatives although this will take place at a later stage.

A number of characteristics of the French and Belgian contexts are favourable to the academic/industrial relationship than is the case in Britain. Some of these are very tangible, others less so.

1. Communication Studies has been in existence longer in these countries than the UK. The earliest courses date from the 1950's with, sometimes, roots extending back before the war. We are told that this history has led to a wider awareness of the nature of the subject outside academic institutions and of course it ensures a greater chance that graduates in the area will have reached senior, influential positions in media organisations.
2. Allowing for different population sizes, Communication Studies is offered, in various forms, in a wider range of institutions and at the basic, common element diploma, level of qualification it is in, the, range of courses offered by many universities in France and Belgium. Again this simple matter of volume ensures a greater visibility for the subject and a greater industrial penetration of its graduates.
3. The 'stages' system is highly developed in France and Belgium. This is a scheme in which undergraduate students spend time in

industrial placements, or 'internships' to use the American terminology. Durations vary from a few weeks to some months although normally at the shorter end of the scale. The 'stages' are intended to be integrated elements of the teaching programme with defined tasks to be performed and producing evaluative reports from supervisors within the organisations providing the opening. An important contribution to the availability of 'stage' places is the rebate from a government training levy which is offered in France to employers providing such places. The wider recognition of Communication Studies described above must also contribute to the willingness to offer openings to students from this as compared to other academic subjects.

4. In most, although not all, institutions visited the approval systems for new courses and for modifications are flexible and fast, enabling a more rapid response to industrial and social change. This compares with the great difficulty experienced, in the public sector at least, in launching new courses in the UK.

5. In both France and Belgium more is happening in the new communications technologies and in the provision of related government funds than is the case in the UK. The mass penetration of the 'minitel' - a broad equivalent to Prestel - is a case in point. Similar indicators are provided by the current major shake-up and expansion of French TV, the planned provision (under the Socialist government) of 1.1 billion francs as subsidy to the French DBS system, and the large-scale development of cable TV in Belgium. If our broad argument is correct, factors of this kind will contribute to an increased awareness of basic policy issues

and an increased demand for graduates with relevant qualifications.

7. There is a long history of professional media training - notably of journalists - being carried out in universities or similar institutions. Although some of the tensions noted above between British media practitioners and academics undoubtedly also occur in France and Belgium, this factor has in a sense given each 'side' a foot in the other's camp and some of the features of Communication Studies develop from this basis.

8. In both France and Belgium a good deal of use is made of industrial representatives as contributors to the teaching programmes of Communication Studies courses. This is not always unproblematic, as the Belgian case study below suggests. But it does represent, on the one hand, a recognition by academics that the voice of industry or administration does have a role beyond that of the carefully circumscribed visiting lecturer, and, on the other, a preparedness by the 'visitors' to enter into an academic exploration of their working assumptions. It should be noted that pay-rates for such work are fairly low and this again testifies to the relatively greater recognition of the relevance of academic work.

9. The centres of undergraduate study in France and Belgium tend also to be centres for pure and applied research. A particularly striking example of this is GRESEC, headed by Bernard Miège, at Grenoble. Indeed the teaching programme there receives vital support from the surplus-value generated by commercial research Contacts. Evidence that this contribution does not dilute the critical perspective is accessible to any reader of Media Culture and Society in the article 'French Socialists and the question of the media: (1983)

> ... contributed by Miege and his deceased predecessor at GRESEC Yves de la Haye. Government grants seem to provide a valuable pump-priming function for these centres and the absence of government sponsored research in this area is a notable feature of the current UK position. But the practical pay-offs from the research output of such centres clearly provides valuable additional visibility for Communication Studies in France and Belgium.

Following this statement of differences, it is worth pointing out the similarities between British and French/Belgian Communication Studies. In terms of course contents, the similarities are striking. There is a similar broad representation of disciplinary interests and the same increasing concern to address the policy questions posed by technological change in a way which draws upon the skills of critical analysis. Similarly in communication studies courses (as distinct from those concentrating on specific technical training) practical work occupies a function intended to support and illustrate analytical issues, rather than attempting to provide professional skills.

The broad graduate career profile also shows similarities to the British model with a larger representation of new media and areas such as advertising and public relations rather than the central media institutions equivalent to BBC/ITV and the national press.

We are well aware of the dangers of presenting an over-optimistic view of the French and Belgian situations. Some of our colleagues in those countries might well choose to emphasise the extent to which they share our problems rather than give any impression that they have overcome them and indeed some of the debates between British academics about industrial

links are powerfully echoed on the continent.

But perhaps the most convincing evidence comes from direct experience. One of the authors, Yves Winkin, teaches Communication Studies at the University of Liege and so can contribute a first-hand account.

The Belgian Case

In my position of participant observer of the relationship between media and academic education in Belgium, I have to stress from the start that my perspective is restricted to the French-speaking community of Belgium and to my rather limited experience as a young academic who has never worked in the media - except for three months as a student in a local newspaper.

This qualification actually leads me right into the heart of our discussion: media education is a rather new academic field in Belgium and educators are often young academics for whom media education is not the result of a conversion from some other field. They studied and graduated in Communication Studies and now teach the first specialised courses in the field. The Department of Communication at the University of Liege is the clearest example of this situation. Founded about 14 years ago by professors of aesthetics and romance philology, it was first some kind of subsidiary for the French Department. Now that three young professors are in post, the Department is fully autonomous and sets its own terms of reference. As opposed to the Department of Journalism of the Free University of Brussels and the Department of Social Communication of the Catholic University of Louvain, which started more than 25 years ago and were first dominated by journalism education (especially in Brussels), Liege is equally devoted to various media, from newspapers to video. A rather academic approach has been prevalent over the years, as opposed to

a pre-professional attitude.

It could be inferred from the above that such a blatantly academic stance (no previous professional experience on the part of the professors, no pre-professional bent imposed to the students) leads the Communication Department of the University of Liege into direct conflicts with the professionals in the field, for example when placements are negotiated between the University and media organisations and enterprises. Actually, it is not the case - or at least much more rarely than one may expect. I want to suggest several explanations for this apparently cordial understanding between these two a priori conflicting universes.

The Belgian media world is now much less monolithic than it used to be. Although the RTBF (Radio-Television de la Communaute Francaise de Belgique)has still the legal monopoly on radio and television broadcasting other media organizations have been allowed, under various legal forms, to compete for audiences, such as RTL (Radio Television Luxembourg) or, at the local level, innumerable radio stations. Several urban cable-TV "experiments" have also been authorized. Very recently, new media conglomerates have appeared: each major newspaper wants to have its own network of local radio stations, thus making more intensive use of its national news production and collecting better local news in return. These newspaper-radio conglomerates are now waiting for a new law that will authorize them to have each their own TV stations. This radical reshaping of the audio-visual landscape of the French-speaking community of Belgium produces three consequences:

1. For the first time in many years, media professionals are keeping an eye on the best Communication students, who may

appropriately fill the slots opened by these fundamental changes in Belgian media. This re-opening of the job market was illustrated last autumn when one of the major local Liege newspapers offered Communication students the possibility of attending a professional workshop that would train them to use new computerized desks. The idea of the newspaper's director was to build a pool of potential journalists ready for tomorrow's media technologies.

2. Because of these expansions the profile of the media professional has changed a lot in the last few years. He is now much younger, and often much better educated. As opposed to the previous generation, especially among local journalists, he is not a high school or college drop out who spends the rest of his life demonstrating that a formal education is of no value. He is thus more willing to coach university students. After all, he was probably in the same position only a few years before.

3. The profile of students has changed enormously in recent years corresponding with changes in the media world. They often enter the Communication Department as fully trained professionals having received their training through a local radio station. They are often older and more mature and work part time, if not full time, as opposed to their elders who lived at their parents' home. They rarely turn into brilliant academic students but their media internships produce praise from their boss (who may think that the University is finally changing for the better.)

In the past, professionals from the media were sporadically invited by

the Communication Department to give lectures - and that was it. The professional pontificated and the students slept. Starting in the autumn of 1984, professionals were offered teaching on six different short intensive courses (on newspapers, TV/Radio, cinema.video, public relations, advertising, media policy). The courses had to be as practical as possible (e.g. editing out UPI print-outs for an 8-hour period). On the whole, the experience turned out to be very positive. Professionals who taught the courses better understood the pedagogical difficulties academics constantly encounter (from locked classrooms to lack of teaching time). They also appeared to be more willing to serve as "maitres de stage", i.e. placement supervisors.

Longer internships, i.e. two 4-week periods for the major specialization and one 4-week period for the minor specialization, also contributed to the improvement of the relationship between media academics and professionals. In the previous course curriculum, placements were very short (2 to 3 weeks) and were seen as jokes by professionals, who were less and less willing to waste their time for these very transient interns. The new curriculum better fits their expectations and does not yet demand too much from them. If students were required to stay for more than one month at a time in a given institution, these would not fit within vacation slots anymore. They could also trigger criticisms from the unions.

A final element in the entente is the internal professionalization of Liege media academics. They may not have had a professional media experience to bring to the University, since they were in-bred products, but they have gained experience over the last years within the institution through an active participation in media-related university

services such as a weekly radio programme on university events, the university monthly magazine or, more recently, the overhaul of the public image of the university hospital. They regularly meet media professionals, understand better the demands for quick, precise and efficient messages, and develop networks of professional acquaintances. The academic authorities of the University plan to press for a more intensive involvement of the professors into applied fields. One of my colleagues of the Department of Communication was invited to take over the university radio station, the administration of audio-visual facilities and the graphic workshop. Since he teaches courses on radio, video, etc., this may sound logical enough - and yet, this may be very risky business, in terms of academic freedom and research activity. So far, this internal professionalization of media academics seems to be positive. But there is a limit that should not be transgressed. Where to draw the line remains to be decided. For example, my colleague is now responsible for the daily programme of a ... carpenter, who is attached to the graphic workshop, which is itself a part of the applied communication administrative services

What I have just briefly sketched here is drawn from my participant observation at the University of Liege. It remains to be seen whether it applies to the other French-speaking universities and may thus offer a base for a "Belgian model" of media professional/academic relationships.

There are indeed several major differences between Liege and its two predecessors. Louvain and Brussels are older, larger and better staffed departments. They also hired from the start former media professionals on a permanent basis. There are, however, similarities

or rather , shared traits. First of all, all three departments exhibit the changes I described earlier about the reshaping of the Belgian audio-visual landscape. For them, as well as for Liege, new job opportunities for young graduates are opening up. Young media professionals become more attuned to academia, while incoming students are already well trained. In Louvain and Brussels, as well as in Liege, intership are now much longer and better supervised by the professionals in charge. All this leads me to say that my "Liege model" may offer the basis for a "Belgian model".

This "Begian model" should not be seen as an ideal model. The everyday reality of the relationship between media professionals and academics is of course not always as rosy as presented here. There are strains, difficulties, suspicions. Yet, there is potential and a specific dynamic seems to be set up.

The Future of Communication Studies

In this paper we continually return to the proposition that current and impending changes in the media industries will stimulate a more positive relationship between these industries and academic Communication Studies. While the exact form of relationship cannot be predicted we would suggest the following as some of its potential features.

a) Skills based training is based on an assumption that the institutional environment will remain broadly stable. It is, after all, this environment which defines the relevance of particular skills and the appropriate levels of proficiency. At times of institutional change more open forms of education will have a more prominent role.

b) With technological change have gone many of the traditional media skills. The increasingly user-friendly new technologies require less training times and will permit the employment of recruits with the skills of the generalist able to develop in response to a wide range of specific needs.

c) The pace of technological change, allied with international moves towards increased privatisation, have brought media policy into a more prominent position in public political debate. More than technical skills are needed if this situation is to be comprehended and maximum advantage gained from the opportunities it offers.

d) The wide-spread use of communication technologies and the increasing recognition of the importance of optimising communication strategies has given media use a prominent role in what would conventionally have been regarded as non-media organisation. Arguably, indeed, the boundary between media and non-media organisation has been

eroded. As a result, the role of traditional training schemes, with their orientation towards print journalism and mainstream television, may have been diminished.

e) Similarly, as the economic basis of those dominant media organisations which have been the venue for traditional communication training is eroded, then other institutions may step into the gap. If a more open form of education is indeed becoming more relevant, then colleges currently providing Communication Studies courses are well placed to take up the opportunity.

f) As the communications industries attempt to sell a wider range of often new products to new markets their need for staff with a broad understanding of communication processes will become more acute. For example the differential success of Prestel and video cassette recorders can only be understood in terms of a knowledge of the audience, its attitudes, use of leasure time, economic resources and so on. These new requirements are among those which the Communication Studies graduate is best equipped to address.

Progress in this direction would be much faster if government financial controls were less strict and attitudes in training less restrictive. But we suggest that evidence from France and Belgium, together with the movement towards greater attention to media policy within British Communication Studies, indicates a direction which developments can be anticipated, even without government encouragement.

Footnote

Undergraduate courses in Communication and Media Studies are inter-disciplinary studies of the means, processess and consequences of the construction of meaning through communication. They concern themselves both with interpersonal, small group and mass communication processes, with a greater emphasis on the latter in Media Studies. More specifically a typical BA programme will be concerned with the conditions under which communication occurs, with an informed and critical engagement with professional practice and with methods of studying and understanding communication.

Such courses aim to produce students knowledgeable of selected themes, concepts and methodologies of communication studies, of processes and practices of human communication in a wide range of settings, with an understanding of the nature and determinants of constraints on communication, the nature and role of market and audience research and those of organisational analysis, together with an appreciation of the nature, origin and relevance of policy issues. Graduates in Communication Studies are expected to have the ~~ability to analyse processes~~ and practices of communication within and between institutions, between institutions and the state and international networks, between institutions and individuals and groups. They should be capable of developing programmes to modify, consolidate, facilitate or improve processes of communication and able to specify 'audience' interests and wants, and to present material to those audiences using verbal and visual means of communication.

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